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18 March 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, CR

SUBJECT : Elimination of Flash Entries in Intellofax System

1. Problem

The implementation of the new Intelligence Subject Code in 1960 necessitates a survey of the value of the Flash System. There are two alternatives: (1) all the active Flashes be recoded according to the revised ISC. This would mean a complete rereading of the reports as they are received and new IBM cards prepared; or (2) the Flash System be abandoned as such.

2. Facts Bearing on the Problem

- a. In 1958, there were approximately 2,100 Flashes in the System. In May 1959, CIA Flashes (12) were discontinued because of irregularity of issuance. In June 1959, 300 Air Flashes were removed from the system when we discontinued coding of Air reports. Therefore, 1,800 Flashes remain. Of these about 1,300 are State and the remaining 500 are divided between Army and Navy.
- b. Since the State Flashes represent the bulk of the Flashes, the discussion pro and con is based on a study of these 1,300 reports. Approximately 250 have no entries since the transfer to the Planetary Cardineer File. 250 are annuals and semi-annuals which should receive normal coding. In spite of repeated purging of the Flash file, there are at least 300 State reports which should be placed in the Nodex category.
- c. Over a period of time, the reports do not always consistently cover the same information. Therefore, the Flash codes set up at the time of the initial Flash are not necessarily the correct codes for each issue.
- d. Over the past 6 months, Flash requests have ranged from only 4-12 requests per month based primarily on Intellofax notations. Researchers do not understand the "Flash" notation on the tape and have a psychological opposition to the Flash System.

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- e. The number of Flash entries made by the Flash Clerk averages about 300 each month or 15 per day. In order to process Flashes, a coder has to screen the incoming reports in order to pull out the Flashes before batching and for passing to the Flash Clerk. The latter spends close to 50% of her time logging in the entries and distributing the documents based on the standard dissemination established by the disseminator.

### 3. Discussion

- a. The Flash System introduces numerous complications in the processing of a limited number of documents. It necessitates:
  - (1) An additional screening category with which screeners must be familiarized.
  - (2) The preparation of typewritten lists to facilitate screening (lists require constant revision).
  - (3) Frequent discussions between coders regarding new Flash possibilities or "problem" Flashes.
- b. The foregoing complications result in a time consuming method of processing and the end product is of an inferior quality to that produced by normal coding.

### 4. Conclusion

- a. Regular document processing of about 15 reports a day would not increase the load of either the coding operation or the dissemination operation to any noticeable degree.
- b. Regular document processing would ensure full and more up-to-date coding of those reports which are deemed worthy of coding. In addition, a full source card would be prepared rather than the abbreviated card now prepared on all Flashes.
- c. This change would eliminate an exception category resulting in a more standardized system.

### 5. Action Recommended

It is recommended that the Flash System be discontinued immediately by the following action:

- a. Treat reports, which previously would have been handled as Flash items, the same as any other report, i.e., screen for Nodexes, code if necessary, and disseminate.

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- b. Transfer the Cardineer file to Library/Circulation for servicing those reports processed under the Flash System.
- c. The slot of the Flash Clerk (GS-5) and the incumbent be transferred to the Analysis Branch as a regular coder or disseminator (GS-7).

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Chief, Document Division

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CIA Librarian

Concurrence:

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Approved:

  
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